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# Original Site of the Southern California College of Chiropractic Razed from Top Down Over a Span of Thirty Years

BRIAN A. SMITH, D.C.\*

In Los Angeles on Monday morning, 5 February 2007, another piece of the chiropractic history was destroyed ... maybe ...

The fire broke out shortly before 5 a.m. and took firefighters more than three hours to extinguish at 4th and Broadway.

No injuries were reported during the fire. More than 175 firefighters battled the blaze in the 100 foot by 200 foot building that housed several businesses (1).

Suite 516 in the O.T. Johnson Building at 356 South Broadway was where the first instruction at the Cale College



of Chiropractic began eighty-two years to the month earlier. The school would remain at this location just nine months before Charles Cale, N.D., moved it to 1406 West Seventh Street. The school is better known as the Southern California College of Chiropractic, a name assumed in 1929. Though having graduated from the Chiropractic College of California, Inc. in 1909 and founding the Los Angeles

College of Chiropractic in the following year, Dr. Cale was not licensed to practice chiropractic until 1929.

Depending on what one determines to be *significant* in history, chiropractic may or may not have suffered a loss from the fire. What part of a structure is *significant* historically? Is the building's main entrance *significant* for chiropractic? Is suite 516 *significant*? Both? Neither?

After firefighters put out the 5 a.m. inferno that had flames shooting into the sky for more than an hour, details of the once-dignified buildings emerged.

The old Johnson building was once sheathed in glazed brick, its ground floor made of iron and glass with paired columns flanking its main entrance, according to an internal report by the Los Angeles Conservancy.

It was one of dozens of buildings (John) Parkinson's firm designed or co-designed in Los Angeles through the 1950s, including City Hall, Union Station, Bullocks Wilshire, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and several buildings on Broadway and Spring Street. About sixty survive in L.A., most of them listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"This may be one of the most significant losses to that district in recent memory," said Ken Bernstein,



Johnson Building, 356 South Broadway; Inset: Advertisement in Los Angeles Times. 25 July 1925.

manager of the city's Office of Historic Resources (2).

Assuming that suite 516 was located on the fifth floor of the building, the loss to chiropractic, if the actual suite is the significant part of the building, occurred more than three decades ago! Sometime in the mid-to-late 1970s, the seven-



story O.T. Johnson Building became the much shorter three-story rump that burned in February. The building may have been damaged in an earthquake or the vacant upper stories presented a liability the owners decided to remove.



Whatever posterity decides the value of the structure to be for the chiropractic profession, for a few short hours on a (relatively) cold February morning, the building shone brightly one last time.

#### REFERENCES

1. Daryl Strickland, staff writer, "Fire Guts Building in Downtown L.A.," Los Angeles Times on the Web, 5 February 2007, [LATimes.com](http://LATimes.com).



*This picture shows a glimpse of the building after its glory days  
Courtesy and Copyright of Mary Margaret Stratton, Lotta Living.*



*An Artist's View. Courtesy and Copyright: Eric Richardson, Flickr.*